

While The Kettle Boils

Dear Friends,

This week my mind is obsessed by the word glamour. It started over an argument. A certain dictionary failed to include the word. My opponent insisted it was of modern coinage. Eventually I tracked it down in the Oxford Dictionary.

Glamour—Magic enchantment, delusive or alluring beauty and charm.

So girls, when next your best beau tells you that you are glamorous, you can perk up a bit.

It is true that only of recent years has the word assumed a popular meaning, and there is no doubt that the screen is responsible for its vogue. In past days glamour appeared to be the property of the favoured few: the great beauties of history—Queen of Sheba, Cleopatra, Dante's Beatrice, Ninon de Lenclos, Pompadour, Nell Gwynne, and so on. The everyday, simple woman would never then have dreamt of aspiring to the label.

Then came the movies, and glamour was telegraphed round the world like an electric current. Glamour became rapidly commercialised, and, incidentally, lost something of its mystery.

Clara Bow was its first serious exponent—only she called it "It." Thousands of girls throughout the world straightway diligently cultivated "It." To-day in Hollywood, the Charm School has a new name for glamour — "Oomph." Anne Sheridan, I believe, is credited with being the original Oomph Girl. Hundreds of feminine fans at this moment are busy cultivating "Oomph."

But whatever name they call it, the meaning remains the same. Personally I think glamour is a glamorous word. It is more than charm. What an inestimable gift for woman to possess — when not cultivated.

It marks her out from the crowd, and keeps a little court always worshipping at her feet. Lucky, lucky women who possess genuine charm. It is not limited to mere attractiveness—to being good looking or smart or dressing exquisitely. Even the best looking and the best dressed woman often fails to have glamour or charm. It seems to pervade the whole person. It is the way you walk, the way you move—the simple gesture of your hand. It is a magic compound of poise and graciousness and personality.

The glamorous being must of course be clear and shining within to express the quality in outward form. On the screen, the home-ground of glamour, you can detect it inevitably. It marks out the great from the mediocre; it raises a woman to an exalted peerage—and all the little pretenders look false and shoddy beside her. Hollywood has made a "glamour-mould" and in it they endeavour to shape the personalities of their potential stars. The result, in nine cases out of ten, is an artificial and

monotonous sameness — comprised of false eyelashes, manufactured mouths, contorted eyebrows, extravagant coiffures, and super streamlined figures. If she is blonde so much the better. If she isn't, well they'll make her one. Walking down a Hollywood boulevard must be like the sensation of "the morning after the night before." One is confronted by duplicates and triplicates to mathematical distraction. All beauties, all "glamorous," but how few of them can lay claim to the real thing.

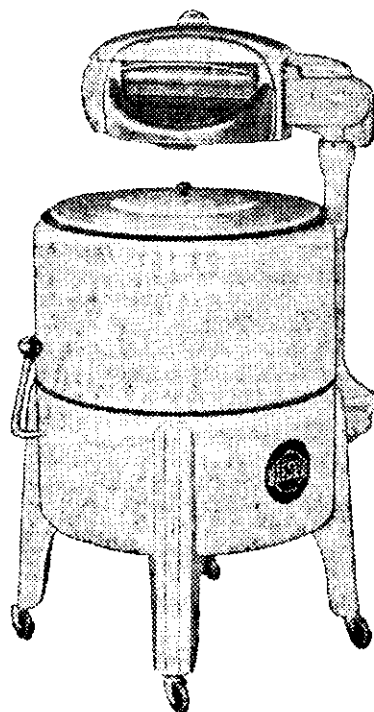
Barrie, I think, captured the essence of glamour in these words when he defined charm in a woman:

"It's a sort of bloom on a woman. If you have it, you don't need to have anything else, and if you don't have it, it doesn't much matter what else you have."

This may sound a bit disheartening to the non-glamour girl. But the case is not quite so hopeless as that. Character does shine through after all. By which I mean just sincerity and worthiness.

Your cordially,

Cynthia



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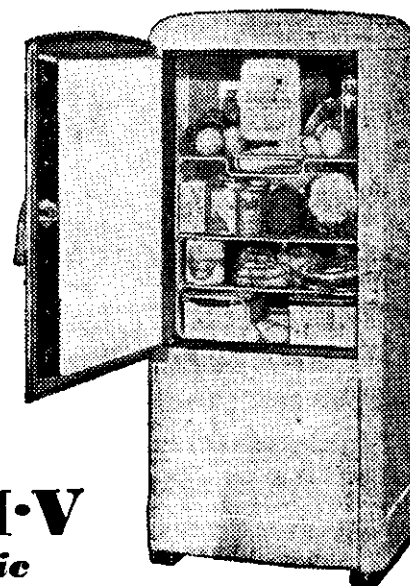
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